



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
OFFICE OF MEDIA RELATIONS

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SCI's Therapeutic Art Program Highlighted by Millsboro Art League

Work from group's participants on gallery display until March 1

Select works created by inmates in a therapeutic art class at Sussex Correctional Institution will be on public display thanks to the Millsboro Art League (MAL), which has offered the class a show in the league's gallery.

"This really is a wonderful opportunity," said program coordinator Nancy Thomas, who started overseeing the group four years ago. "The art league was very enthusiastic about the show, which goes along with its commitment to being community-based and community-focused."

The MAL gallery is located at 203 Main Street in Millsboro. It is open Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and Sundays from 1-3 p.m. The show featuring the works of SCI's art class will run through March 1, with a reception - open to the public - scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 9, from 2-4 p.m.

The class, which has been in place at the Georgetown prison for approximately 10 years, is viewed by most participants as a way to maintain some structure and stability during their period of incarceration.

"It keeps me on the right track and it keeps me positive," stated William McKinney, who prefers to paint subjects that are peaceful and calm. "It gives you a little bit of hope."

Classmate Lawrence Dickens agrees. "It's therapeutic and you learn discipline," he said. "You can take yourself away from this place and get a feel for the outside."

William Smiley, who was working on a blue sky and white clouds background, said he used to doodle as a child, but never thought anyone could make a living in art. His time in the program has provided him a different outlook.

"Through the encouragement of my mom and family, I hope to pursue this when I go home," he said, noting he was scheduled for release in around 18 months. "I'm thinking about getting an art degree, if possible."

Although Thomas has some experience in art and teaching, the program is not instructional and there is no pre-requisite of artistic ability in order to participate.

"Instructional materials are available and some of the inmates with more of an artistic background offer some pointers and assistance if asked," she said. "But I want them to do what they want, in terms of creating art. They enjoy that and I think that provides the best type of end result for a therapeutic program."

The class, which is comprised of around 20 inmates, meets once per week. The mediums available are acrylics, watercolor, colored pencil and pastels. Each artist works in the medium of his choice.

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Lawrence Dickens (foreground) works on a painting during the weekly therapeutic art program at Sussex Correctional Institution in Georgetown. Select works from the program will be on display in the Millsboro Art League gallery through March 1.

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Russell Sullivan focuses on his latest project during a session of the Sussex Correctional Institution's therapeutic art program.

For more information:
Millsboro Art League, <http://www.millsboroartleague.com/>

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